

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2012*

**Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Atlanta, Georgia**  
*March 16, 2012*

*The President.* So usually I have better accommodations for our events. [Laughter] But we decided to slum it here today. Everybody, have a seat. Everybody, have a seat.

It is wonderful to see all of you. I've got a bunch of good friends here. It is a nice, intimate setting, which means that I'm going to have time to have a conversation instead of giving a long speech. And since I've been giving long speeches all day, I'm—and most of you have heard it before—I'm glad that it's going to be more of a dialogue.

First of all, I just want to thank Tyler for this event. I was saying to him, when we were over at his studio, there is something about America, with all the struggles we've been going through and all the changes that have taken place in our history, for him to come from where he is and be who he is, for me to come from where I am and have this extraordinary privilege. It says something special about this place. And for Tyler to continue to be so humble and thoughtful and generous is just a—is a testimony to him and his family. And so we are just so grateful to him and just feel blessed to see his success. So thank you so much, Tyler. Appreciate it.

We've got a couple of elected officials who are doing outstanding work. First of all, your own mayor, who is blowing up, as they say. [Laughter] He is a star, and people all across the country are starting to get a sense of how astute he is and how effective he is in leading this city—Mr. Kasim Reed is in the house.

Our host when we get to Charlotte, North Carolina—Mayor Anthony Foxx is here.

And then there is my good friend Oprah, who very early on, when I was still running, just decided that she would support this guy with a name that nobody could pronounce. And just like books and skin cream—[laughter]—when Oprah decides she likes you, then other people like you too. [Laughter] And she has continued to be just—not just a friend, but somebody who Michelle and I seek out in thinking about not just the day-to-day issues of the day but trying to keep our focus on the big picture. And what she's done for so many people, not just in America, but around the world, is extraordinary. So I just want to say thank you to Oprah.

We've had a good day. I was back home in Chicago, came down to Atlanta. It's warm every place. It gets you a little nervous about what's happening to global temperatures, but when it's 75 degrees in Chicago in the beginning of March, you start thinking—

*Audience member.* Something is wrong.

*The President.* Yes. On the other hand, really have enjoyed the nice weather. [Laughter]

And we're starting to gear up, starting to get into—back into that campaign mode. And it makes you reflect on the journey we've traveled so far over the last 3 years. As some of you may have seen, we released a video yesterday. If you haven't seen it, it's worth catching. Because what it reminds us of is where we were, because you can't understand where we are unless you have a good sense of where we've been.

And this time—around this time 4 years ago—or 3 years ago, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. The banking system had completely locked up. The auto industry was on the verge of

collapse. The world economy was hemorrhaging. And 3 years later, we've now created close to 4 million jobs. The banking system is healthy again. Credit is flowing. Small businesses are starting to get back on their feet. Manufacturing is as strong as it's been in a couple of decades in terms of job growth. We still have enormous challenges, but we've made extraordinary progress.

Now, what I always remind people of is, I ran for President not just to get back to where we were before the crisis; I ran because the status quo precrisis wasn't good enough. But it was for too many people a betrayal of the American Dream, the idea that if you work hard, you can make it, regardless of what you look like, where you come from, what your name is, that as a consequence of hard work you could support a family, buy a home, send your kids to college, retire with dignity and respect. That core American Dream had been fraying for too many people.

And so even as these last 3 years we have been dealing with crises and getting the auto industry back on its feet and making sure the banking system was sounder and dealing with two wars and going after Al Qaida and trying to clean up after these extraordinary challenges, I've still tried to stay focused on the fact that the promises we made in the campaign had to do with building an economy that sustained itself and that was built on a solid foundation, not phony financial profits or debt, but was built on something more sound and more lasting and that we would reopen opportunity for everybody and give people more security as they pursue their dreams.

And that's what we've done. The health care bill will give 30 million people health care for the first time. But it also means that everybody who already has health care, the insurance companies can't drop you just because you get sick or you've got a preexisting condition or— young people, 2½ million people right now have health care that didn't have it before because they can stay on their parents' plan.

The changes we're making in education—46 States have initiated reforms across the country that are reemphasizing training teachers, and not just teaching to the test, but allowing creativity and passion in the classroom, holding folks accountable, saying we're going to get rid of teachers who aren't doing a good job, but also rewarding teachers who are doing a great job and lifting them up.

Across the country, we are seeing a renaissance of advanced manufacturing, so we're not just a country that's known for buying stuff and consuming stuff, but we're starting to build and sell and export things that are made in America.

We want to rebuild our infrastructure, and we began to do that through the Recovery Act, so that once again we've got the best airports and the best roads and the best bridges and the best Internet service, accessing rural communities and inner cities so that everybody can tap into this new 21st-century economy.

We've tried to make sure that fairness is not just something we give lip service to, but that we actually deliver on. And so whether it's reinvigorating the Justice Department's Office of Civil Rights or ending "don't ask, don't tell," we've tried to make sure that we mean what we say when we say that this is a country where everybody is equal before the law.

Internationally, we've restored respect for America. We've ended one war. We're transitioning out of another one. We went after the people who actually attacked us on 9/11, and Al Qaida is weaker than it's been in years. And Usama bin Laden is not around.

We strengthened our alliances, the respect for the United States, the restoration of our moral standing by banning torture and upholding rule of law. That makes all kinds of differences for people as they travel overseas and they try to do business overseas.

So here's the thing, though: This is not a 3-year project; this is an 8-year project. So I need you one more time. And we're confident we can get there, but we're going to need your help. So I've said this—I was saying this at the speech that I gave at Tyler's studio: I know I'm a little grayer now—[*laughter*]*—*and it's not as trendy to be an Obama supporter, because it's not as fresh. Those posters are kind of rolled up in some closet somewhere. [*Laughter*] But my determination—my determination is unwavering. My passion to bring about change is undiminished. The need is still great. The American people are still relying on us.

And so I hope that you are game to work just as hard, if not harder, in the coming months to make sure we finish what we began. I'll be counting on you, and more importantly, the American people are counting on you.

All right. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 p.m. at the residence of Tyler Perry. In his remarks, he referred to talk show host Oprah Winfrey. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Obama Victory Fund 2012 fundraisers :: Atlanta, GA.

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*Names:* Foxx, Anthony; Obama, Michelle; Perry, Tyler; Reed, Kasim; Winfrey, Oprah.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Business and industry : Credit freeze situation; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Advanced manufacturing, promotion efforts; Commerce, international : U.S. exports :: Expansion; Communications : Broadband technology; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Teachers; Elections : 2012 Presidential and congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Georgia : Democratic Party Events; Georgia : President's visit; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Young adults :: Insurance coverage as dependents, age limit extension; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Justice, Department of: Office of Civil Rights; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : September 11, 2001, attacks; Terrorism : Terrorists :: Torture of terrorism suspects, prohibition; Transportation : Infrastructure, national improvement efforts.

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